

Department of Justice

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OVER 1,100 SEXUAL PREDATORS ARRESTED DURING U.S. MARSHALS "OPERATION FALCON II"

One Hundred Fifty-One Fugitives Arrested in Southern District of Illinois

Fairview Heights, Illinois—More than 9,000 fugitives, including 1,102 fugitives wanted for committing felony sex offenses, violent sexual assaults, and failure to register as sex offenders, were arrested during Operation FALCON II, which took place from April 17 to April 23, U.S. Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales and Marshals Service Director John F. Clark announced today. More than 150 fugitives were arrested in the Southern District of Illinois, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois Randy G. Massey and U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of Illinois Don Slaznik announced today.

According to Acting United States Attorney Randy G. Massey, "This coordinated effort by representatives of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies is proof of the tremendous positive impact we can have for the citizens of this District when law enforcement officers from every jurisdiction work together to fight crime. Fortunately, the Southern District of Illinois has a long history of such cooperation. The efforts of these fine officers have helped make each of our communities safer places to live and to raise our families."

"This year, we had 44 agencies involved," said United States Marshal Don Slaznik. "Tom Woods, Supervisory Deputy U.S. Marshal, informed me that every agency that was called not only volunteered to participate, but also asked how many officers, deputies, or agents they could send. This is a true testament to the inter-agency cooperation that exists in our district. An operation like this could not get off the ground without this type of cooperation."

Nationally, Deputy U.S. Marshals and their law enforcement partners arrested a total of 9,037 fugitives, and cleared more than 10,419 felony warrants during the seven-day operation. Task force members arrested 462 fugitives wanted for a variety of violent sex offenses, 311 fugitives for other felony sex crimes, 783 unregistered sex offenders, 73 homicide arrests with 87 warrants cleared, and 163 documented gang members. They also cleared 2,941 drug cases, and seized 111 guns, more than \$120,265.00 in cash, and more than 91 kilograms of narcotics.

In Southern Illinois, out of the 151 fugitives arrested, 17 were wanted for violent sexual offenses, including rape, forcible sodomy, and sexual assault or were wanted on charges for failure to register as sex offenders. Deputy Marshals and local task force officers also arrested, 68 wanted on narcotics charges, and more than forty with gang affiliations. *Illegal drugs and several firearms were recovered during the FALCON II initiative.*

A total of 97 officers, deputies, special agents, and deputy marshals from twenty-four local, ten sheriff's departments, six state, and four federal law enforcement agencies participated in the arrests in the Southern District of Illinois.

Like last year, Operation FALCON II coincided with the Department of Justice's "National Crime Victims' Rights Week." In announcing the results of the fugitive initiative, U.S. Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales praised the efforts of both the Marshals Service and the hundreds of participating agencies, noting that "the significance of holding it during this week was that it allows the victims and their families to find some element of closure. Just as we recognize the survivors for their courage, we applaud all of the law enforcement officers for their dedication."

Fugitives whose cases were adopted by Operation FALCON II were wanted by the Marshals Service, other federal agencies, United States Attorneys, and courts at every level of government. Because the highest priority was given to sexual predators and unregistered convicted sex offenders, the United States Marshal Service entered into a partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which provided high-profile cases and facilitated contacts with state agencies that maintain sex offender registries. The USMS also worked closely with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to ensure maximum support for cases involving narcotics and weapons.

PHOTOS/VIDEO AVAILABLE

The Marshals Service Office of Public Affairs has photos of actual arrests during Operation FALCON II available to press at www.usmarshals.gov/falcon2, as well as fact sheets on arrests nationwide and in each of the agency's participating. A ten-minute B-roll video package for broadcasters will be available for satellite distribution on April 27 at 2:30–2:45 P.M. EDT at C-Band coordinate IA 6 T-17 Downlink Frequency 4040 V 93 degrees WL; 6:30–6:45 P.M. EDT; 10:00–10:15 P.M. EDT at C-Band coordinate IA 6 T-16 Downlink Frequency 4020 H 93 degrees WL.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

A complete list of all of the federal, state, and local agencies that participated in Operation FALCON II is available at the USMS website at www.usmarshals.gov/falcon2

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